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Dec. 25, 1965

Lee Harvey Oswald and Kennedy Assassination

REFERENCE: Memorandum of Conversation, December 10, 1965

Elena Garro de Paz, Mexican writer
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AMB, DCM, P (2), P/R, L, CRD, CR/T (2)

On December 25, Sra. de Paz again discussed at considerable length her alleged encounter with Oswald. Also present, as they were at the original conversation on this subject, were my wife and Sr. de Paz' daughter, Elena. Some further information on this subject was given subsequently on January 9, 1966. During this latter conversation, Sra. de Paz admitted that she had gone to the Embassy on an earlier occasion with her daughter and mother-in-law and had talked to two Embassy officers (presumably from the Legal Attaché's Office) about this matter. She said since the Embassy officers did not give much credence to anything they said, they did not bother to give a very complete story. The following information supplements and in some instances corrects that given in the memorandum of December 10.

1. Lydia, Horacio, and Rubén Durán are all cousins of Sra. de Paz. Silvia Durán is married to Horacio, who is a rather weak man. Horacio was converted to communism by Ricardo Guerra. Sra. de Paz has never had anything to do with Silvia, whom she detests and considers a whore. Rubén was born in the United States and served in the US Army during the war. He still goes to the US from time to time but has no relatives or particular connections there. Lydia also travels occasionally to the US. The party in question was held at the home of Rubén Durán.

2. She believes that the date of the party was about September 2 or 3, 1963. It was a few days before the visit of the Soviet astronaut, Gagarin. She believes it was a Monday or Tuesday because it was an odd night to have a party.

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(September 2 and 3 do, in fact, fall on Monday and Tuesday.) She cannot conveniently reconstruct the date from her calendar because it is in a desk which is now stored away with a lot of other furniture blocking it.

3. At the party, the man she assumes was Oswald wore a black sweater. He tended to be silent and stared a lot at the floor. Of his two young American companions, one was very tall and slender and had long blond hair which hung across his forehead. He had a gaunt face and a rather long protruding chin. The other was also rather tall and had short, light brown hair, but he had no real distinguishing characteristics. All three were obviously American and did not dance or mix with the other people. The three were evidently friends, because she saw them by chance the next day walking down the street together.

4. Although Sra. de Paz had returned from an extended stay in Europe only in June or July, she had already met Isachio Azcue and knows positively that he was at the party. On another occasion (it was not clear whether before or after the party in question), she attended a party where she saw, among others, Isachio Azcue; Enilio Carballido, the pro-Castro writer; and a Latin American Negro man with red hair. (These last two were not at the Durán party as was mistakenly stated in the December 10 memorandum.) Carballido and Azcue, along with some others, were in a heated discussion on that occasion about President Kennedy, and they came to the conclusion that the only solution was to kill him. Sra. de Paz said that Carballido is known as a Castro agent in Mexico. He has been to Red China, the Soviet Union, and many times to Cuba. Following the assassination of Kennedy, he spent about a year in Cuba. When he returned, he got a job teaching at Rutgers University through Dr. José Venguez Arce, who was formerly with the Rockefeller Foundation in New York and who is now a professor at Rutgers. Carballido is presumably still there. The day after the assassination, Elenita Paz encountered Sra. de Azcue in Sanboras. On seeing her, Sra. de Azcue turned and hurried out of the store. Azcue was immediately called back to Havana after the assassination, and his wife followed him shortly thereafter.

5. Others present at the Durán party in addition to her and her daughter were Horacio and Silvia Durán; Lydia Durán; Sra. de Paz' philoceanist sister, Dava Guerrero; General José Jesús Clark Flores and his mistress, a Guatemalan woman; a medical doctor from Dalinda Hospital; a young American couple, both fat and blond, who were spending their honeymoon in Mexico; a 40-year old Mexican woman in a red dress; and a rather strange man who claimed to be Mexican but did not look or talk like one. His first name was Alejandro and he subsequently wrote Elenita several love letters. She claims she turned these in to the American Embassy. Ricardo Guerra, a communist, and his wife, Beatriz Castellanos, a writer, were both supposed to come to the party but declined to come, according to Sra. de Paz, when they learned that she would be there.

6. On Saturday, November 23, 1963, the day after the Kennedy assassination, Sr. de Paz' brother drove her and her daughter at about 3:00 p.m. to the Cuban Embassy. Her brother was embarrassed by their behavior and drove a block up the street to wait for them after letting them out. The two women then went inside the gate and shouted "assassin" and other insults.

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7. Later that day, they were visited by a friend, Manuel Calvillo, who said that they were in serious danger from the communists and that he would take them to a small hotel where they would be safe for a few days. (It was not clear whether he said he was acting under orders or not.) Calvillo was known around town to be an undercover agent for the Secretariat of Cuba and to be a personal friend of Ros Polanco and Gustavo Diaz Ordaz; accordingly they believed and trusted him. Among other things he said was that Sylvia Durán had been arrested. This was not public information at that time.

8. Since she could not remember the name of the hotel, Sra. de Paz took me to the part of town where she remembered it to be, and we found it. It is the Vermont Hotel, located at Calle Vermont 29. It is one and a half blocks west of Avenida de los Insurgentes just south of the Viaducto. She stated that the hotel is owned by someone from San Luis Potosí and is used by businessmen from that area. She and her daughter did not personally register at the hotel. She thinks Calvillo registered them as relatives or friends of his from San Luis Potosí. Although modest, it is a modern and comfortable-looking hotel. They stayed there until the following Friday and hardly left their room.

9. It was not until after they were in the hotel and saw the newspapers and the photographs of Oswald that she and her daughter both came to the independent conclusion that he was one of the young Americans at the Durán party. When Calvillo visited them at the hotel, she told him she wanted to report to the American Embassy what she knew about Oswald's connections with local communists and with Azcua. Calvillo said she shouldn't go because the American Embassy was full of communist spies. When she returned to her house the following week, guards were posted outside it.

10. When she saw her sister, Dora Guerrero, after returning home, the latter was terrified because of Oswald's presence at the Durán party. She had come to the conclusion independently that it was Oswald whom she had seen there. Sra. de Guerrero was also very angry with the Durán's because she thought they had become involved in the assassination plot for money. Despite being a philocommunist, she was an admirer of President Kennedy's because she is also a patriot and a monarchist. About two months after the assassination, Sra. de Guerrero was called in by two communists, whom she refuses to identify, and was warned with threats never to reveal to anyone that she had been to a party with Oswald. She remained so terrified that she would not accompany Sra. de Paz to the American Embassy to tell what she knew of Oswald.

11. A short time after the assassination, Emilio Carballido, the pro-Castro writer, took the Duráns to Jalapa, Veracruz and kept them out of the way for a while until the initial shock of the Kennedy assassination wore off. Carballido has connections with the University of Veracruz Press.

12. Also shortly after the assassination, an American woman named June Cobb came and spent several days in Sra. de Paz's house. She was sent by their mutual friends, Enrique Odio, a Costa Rican who is now June Cobb's roommate and who was formerly the mistress of Vasquez Arenal when he was with the Engelbiller Foundation,

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and Ernesto de la Peña, a writer and a translator at the Mexican Foreign Office. June Cobb expressed great interest in the Kennedy assassination. She succeeded in getting Dora Carrero drunk one night, and the latter told all she knew about Oswald and the party at the home of Rubén Durán. Miss Cobb then wanted them to tell what they knew to the American authorities. Claiming to be a CIA agent, she advised against going to the American Embassy and urged them to go to Texas to tell their story. Failing in this, she said she would arrange a meeting in a quiet café. The meeting did not materialize, however, because she was asked to leave the Paz house. Miss Cobb had kicked Sra. de Paz' cat. B1, ES

13. At about the end of January, 1964, Rubén Durán visited Sra. de Paz. He said he was going to visit the United States and wanted her to protect him as much as possible while he was away. He feared it might be discovered that Oswald had been to his house. Since he had been born in the United States, he knew it would be easy for the Mexican Government to divest him of his citizenship and deport him. They both agreed to say nothing about it. He said it was Silvia Durán who got him involved with Oswald. He added that he was not really a communist and was against the assassination.

14. About six months after the assassination, when she was talking to Noe Pelomares of the Secretariat of Gobernación about another matter, she told the story of her encounter with Oswald. He urged her not to go to the American Embassy and suggested that if she insisted on doing anything at all, she merely write the Embassy an anonymous letter.

15. Sra. de Paz stated that it was common knowledge that Silvia Durán was the mistress of Oswald. The only person she could remember who told her this, however, was Victor Rico Galán, the pro-Castro journalist.

16. She also stated that she understood that Oswald had come to Mexico more than once.

Some time after the above was written, I had some friends in notes from which she had reconstructed the date of the party and concluded that it was in late September — this fact is at a time when Oswald was known to be here. I conveyed this to Nat Davis in L. and he stated she had reported it correctly when she originally talked to L. He said that someone at party, however, alleged that there were no Americans there. (What was said to me was that the party was held in a house in the city of Mexico) that OSW. had been in Mexico. Davis also mentioned that party at which Oswald was present and which was held for

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